(b) whether Government would issue direction to the Corporation to repay the said amount after obtaining the Indemnity Bond/Bank Guarantee or shall give the bond etc. against the said amount;

(c) whether the Oil Corporation would be directed to give at least bank rate of interest on this said amount; and

(d) if not, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (d) No, Sir, IOC has reported that for all customers, Party's Account at Depot (PAD) is being maintained at the supply locations and any credit balance in the PAD of a dealer is adjusted against the payments to be received for subsequent supplies. These are running accounts, and adjustment of balances outstanding at a point of time is an ongoing exercise.

As a matter of system, generally no Indemnity Bond/Bank Guarantees are sought in respect of the refunds claimed by the customers arising out of their running accounts. Joint reconciliation of the account between IOC and the customer is a conclusive proof of the amounts due to either party and does not call for any Indemnity Bond/Bank Guarantees Unless specifically agreed, in a situation of running accounts which over a period of time could reflect balances in favour of either of the parties, there is no system/arrangement of charging interest by either of the parties. Having regard to the merit of this system and that the relations between the customers and the IOC are purely based on commercial considerations which are guided by the mutually agreed terms on customer to customer basis, Government does not consider necessary to issue any directive in this regard.

Discrimination in Newly Allotted SKO dealership

2737. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minsiter of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the oil Corporations are providing the working capital alongwith the developed infrastructure under Licence in Form XIII to newly allotted SKO Dealership to ladies and SC/ST category.

(b) whether Government would issue directions to the oil Corporations to provide the same facility to the Old dealers of above categories who are being forced to obtain licence in Form XIII; and

(c) if not, the reasons for discrimination and the estimated loss to Oil Corporation for extending this facility to such dealers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (c) In order to ensure that SC/ST allottees of petroleum products do not fall prey to the money lenders or compelled to enter into benami transaction for operation of dealerships/distributorships allotted to them, Government had notified a scheme in 1992 for providing financial assistance to them. Under this Scheme, dealerships/ distributorships complete in all respects are provided including working capital loan to the persons belonging to SC/ST. The Scheme is applicable to those allottees who have been allotted dealerships/distributorships from 1.4.1992 onwards. With effect from 1.4 1997, the Scheme has been extended to widows and unmarried women above 40 years of age without earning parents.

As the old dealers have established their business over the years and would have developed adequate financial and other resources to provide the facilities under Form XIII licence, the new dealers only are extended this facility and the oil

companies may not be able to arrange for necessary resources to provide this facility to old dealers.

Complaint Against depot Manager Ambala Cantt.

2738. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some complaint against Depot Manager HPC Ambala Cantt. is pending regarding theft of Lubricating Oil through bogus invoices, sale of furnace oil to bogus/closed units on Bogus C forms and adulteration of kerosene in Petrol etc.

(b) whether the excise and taxation department of Haryana Government is also conducting enquiry on this issue;

(c) what action has been taken/ proposed to be taken against the said Depot Incharge/Manager;

(d) whether the Corporation is going to give some reward to such officers for this said bravery; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) to (e) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. had received a pseudonymous complaint that the Depot Incharge of Ambala Depot has allegedly indulged in irregularities like release of Furance Oil to closed units, adulteration of petrol with kerosene and release of adulterated petrol to dealers, release of lube oil against fabricate challans, selling of Lubes without bills and challans, etc. The complaint against officers/staff was investigated by the Corporation. It was found that the documentation procedures laid down for sale of lubricants were not adhered to. The operating status of a few establishments from which orders for Furnace oil had been received, was not verified resulting in sale of product to a non-operative unit. The allegation regarding adulteration of petrol was not substantiated. Disciplinary action was initiated in accordance with the Conduct, Discipline and Appeal Rules of the Corporation against the Depot Manager and the penalty of "withholding annual increment" in 1996 was imposed on him. Government is not aware of any inquiry conducted by Excise & Taxation Deptt. of Haryana Govt. in the matter.

I.O.C. Offering equity to Foreign Companies

2739. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minsiter of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether I.O.C. is offering equity to foreign companies at its new refineries;

(b) whether any long term policy has been formulated by Government on the future role of I.O.C. in the Oil refineries sector;

(c) to what extent are IOC's Oil refineries activities profitable;

(d) whether low productivity is a major problem for IOC refineries;

(e) whether study has been done on the impact of the refineries sector of IOC on its distribution efficiency; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR): (a) yes. Sir. Govt. has approved on 14.7.98 setting up of a 9 MMTPA grassroot refinery at Abhayachandrapur, Orissa at an estimated cost of Rs. 8270 crore based on May, 1998 prices through Joint Venture Company between Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). The